IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-54 (Canceled)

55. (New) An image processing apparatus, comprising:

an inputting device configured to input an original image composed of a character;

a background generating device configured to generate a background by using one of dither and error diffusion methods in accordance with one of a number of bits, a number of lines, and density;

an embedding device configured to embed an information into the background; and

a combining device configured to combine the background in which the information has been embedded with the original image.

56. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 55, wherein the embedding device embeds the information by applying one of pixel and frequency conversions.

57. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 55, further comprising:

an embedding information amount designating device configured to designate an amount of the embedding information.

58. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 56, further comprising:

an embedding information amount designating device configured to designate an amount of the embedding information.

59. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 55, wherein the background is formed from an aperiodic pattern.

60. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 56, wherein the background is formed from an aperiodic pattern.

61. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 59, wherein the original image is a full-color image and only brightness is processed.

62. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 60, wherein the original image is a full-color image and only brightness is processed.

63. (New) An image processing method, comprising:

inputting an original image composed of a character;

generating a background by using one of dither and error diffusion methods in accordance with one of a number of bits, a number of lines, and density;

embedding an information into the background; and

combining the background after the embedding with the original image.

64. (New) The image processing method of claim 63, wherein the embedding embeds information by applying one of pixel and frequency conversions.

65. (New) The image processing method of claim 63, further comprising:

designating an amount of the embedding information.

66. (New) The image processing method of claim 64, further comprising:

designating an amount of embedding information.

67. (New) The image processing method of claim 63, wherein the generating a background generates a background formed from an aperiodic pattern.

68. (New) The image processing method of claim 64, wherein the generating a background generates a background formed from an aperiodic pattern.

69. (New) The image processing method of claim 67, wherein the original image is a full-color image and only brightness is processed.

70. (New) The image processing method of claim 68, wherein the original image is a full-color image and only brightness is processed.

71. (New) A computer program product storing instructions for execution on a computer system, which when executed by the computer system, causes the computer system to perform:

inputting an original image composed of a character;

generating a background by using one of dither and error diffusion methods in accordance with one of a number of bits, a number of lines, and density;

embedding an information into the background; and

combining the background after the embedding with the original image.

72. (New) The computer program product of claim 71, wherein the embedding embeds information by applying one of pixel and frequency conversions.

73. (New) The computer program product of claim 63, further comprising:

designating an amount of the embedding information.

74. (New) The computer program product of claim 64, further comprising:

designating an amount of embedding information.

75. (New) The computer program product of claim 63, wherein the generating a background generates a background formed from an aperiodic pattern.

76. (New) The computer program product of claim 64, wherein the generating a background generates a background formed from an aperiodic pattern.

77. (New) The computer program product of claim 67, wherein the original image is a full-color image and only brightness is processed.

78. (New) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein the original image is a full-color image and only brightness is processed.

79. (New) An image processing apparatus, comprising:

means for inputting an original image composed of a character;

means for generating a background by using one of dither and error diffusion methods in accordance with one of a number of bits, a number of lines, and density;

means for embedding an information into the background; and

means for combining the background in which the information has been embedded with the original image.

80. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 79, wherein the means for embedding embeds the information by applying one of pixel and frequency conversions.

81. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 79, further comprising:

means for designating an amount of the embedding information.

82. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 80, further comprising:

means for designating an amount of the embedding information.

83. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 79, wherein the means for generating a background forms a background from an aperiodic pattern.

84. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 80, wherein the means for generating a background forms a background from an aperiodic pattern.

85. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 83, wherein the means for inputting inputs an original image that is a full-color image and only brightness is processed.

86. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 84, wherein the means for inputting inputs an original image that is a full-color image and only brightness is processed.